

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The National Park Service (NPS) is proposing to implement a shuttle system that would serve many popular sites within the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA). The “Heart-of-the-Park” Demonstration Shuttle Project is a one-year, weekend service only program that would use mini-buses to travel in a bi-directional loop around the central part of the Park using Malibu Canyon Road, the Pacific Coast Highway, Kanan Dume Road, and the Mulholland Highway. The purpose of the Demonstration Shuttle Project would be to determine how well a park shuttle transit system could solve some of the most serious transportation challenges such as roadway congestion, lack of accessibility, limited parking, and improving visitor experience. The projected annual ridership for the Demonstration Program is 23,500 to 30,500 passengers for the first year of operation.

The proposed shuttle system would use a fleet of four compressed natural gas (CNG)- or equivalent clean-fuel mini-buses. The shuttle buses would stop at 13 sites including Malibu Creek State Park, Malibu Lagoon State Beach, Solstice Canyon, Zuma Beach, Paramount Ranch, Tapia Park, Backbone Trailhead, Rocky Oaks, Peter Strauss Ranch, and four other flag stop sites. Some of these shuttle stops would require some level of improvement to accommodate the mini-buses and enhance public usability. These improvements would include shuttle aprons and turn lanes, signage, information kiosks, public restrooms, overhead canopies, and benches. All major stops would be wheelchair accessible.

The basic weekend service has the first clockwise trips departing Malibu Creek State Park at approximately 9 a.m. (with a 23 minute offset for the counter-clockwise route) and the last trip departing at 4 p.m., so that the last bus is off route by approximately 6 p.m. During the spring and summer months, the service day would be extended an additional 3 hours. Service frequency is hourly in each direction with running time at approximately one hour and 48 minutes.

Since the Demonstration Program involves the use of park facilities that are administered by the National Park Service and the California Department of Parks (CSP), the environmental document was prepared as a joint federal and state document in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and other applicable federal and state laws. The National Park Service is the federal lead agency under NEPA and the California Department of Parks and Recreation is the state lead agency under CEQA. It is anticipated that this Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared under NEPA and the Initial Study (IS) prepared under CEQA will lead to the approval of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND).

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As described in the following EA/IS, the proposed project would have localized short-term effects on soils, water quality, transportation and circulation, biological resources, and cultural resources. These direct effects are related to the construction of shuttle system improvements such as localized grading to accommodate the placement of shuttle aprons, landscape berms, installation of a public restroom, information kiosks, overhead canopies, and benches. Mitigation measures to minimize or avoid adverse effects on resources have been incorporated into the Preferred Alternative. Such measures include monitoring of construction areas to avoid and/or record any archaeological and biological resources, and placement of appropriate warning signs to alert other drivers and pedestrians of shuttle buses entering or exiting high traffic areas.